Check for updates

Article

Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences
2018, Vol. 40(1) 22–36
© The Author(s) 2018
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0739986317754299
journals.sagepub.com/home/hjb
SAGE

Academically Successful Latino Undocumented Students in College: Resilience and Civic Engagement

Ali Borjian[1]

Abstract

This qualitative study focused on academically successful undocumented immigrant college students who also advocate for access to educational opportunities for others. Using purposeful sampling, eight students attending a large university were recruited and interviewed. Findings indicate that academically successful students are eager to obtain economic security and are highly motivated to give back to their communities. Respondents emphasized that pro-immigrant public policy and institutional processes and support are important factors for their development of academic resiliency and success. Findings revealed that although the results of the U.S. presidential election have saddened and angered the respondents, they continue to express their strong commitment to pursue their dreams. Researchers are urged to focus on academically successful undocumented immigrant students in order to learn about the factors that contribute to their academic success. Learning from resilient students can inform educators regarding effective practices that support students who are currently less successful in school.

Keywords

undocumented immigrant students, resiliency, civic engagement

[1]San Francisco State University, CA, USA

Corresponding Author:
Ali Borjian, Department of Elementary Education, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave, Burk Hall 199, San Francisco, CA 94132, USA.
Email: borjian@sfsu.edu

Economically marginalized undocumented immigrant students' educational journeys are seldom without complications, and many are forced to give up on their schooling far too early. However, some students, despite facing social, financial, and legal barriers, successfully navigate the higher education system (Borjian, 2016). The goal of this article is to present the collective voices of academically successful undocumented immigrant college students and to learn about their sources of motivation for achievement. The study focused on the interaction between resiliency and civic engagement.

The impetus for this study was our limited data to empirically represent the educational experiences of academically successful undocumented immigrant students attending institutions of higher education. By presenting some of the varied factors that motivated the participants to obtain academic success, and ways in which they are advocating for others, it is hoped that educators are better informed on ways to support undocumented students realize their educational aspirations.

By learning about academically successful immigrant students' schooling achievement and civic engagement, educators, administrators, and policy makers could be inspired to establish appropriate support systems that motivate immigrant youth to pursue higher education. Investigating factors that contributed to respondents' desire to academically succeed can help us better understand the relationship between resiliency, academic achievement, and civic engagement.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) was established in 2012, under an executive action by President Obama. Although the program does not provide a path to citizenship, it grants temporary deportation relief as well as authorization to work for hundreds of thousands of young people. DACA recipients are high school graduates who were born outside of the United States, but the vast majority grew up in this country. As academic resiliency can be affected by multiple factors, I was interested to learn how undocumented students are responding to the results of presidential election and the promises of Trump to deport masses of people.

Approximately 2.1 million undocumented youth live in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). There is a critical need for research that reflects on the experiences of students occupying multiple intersections of oppressed identity groups (e.g., undocumented + socioeconomically marginalized), as they encounter social, cultural, familial, and systemic barriers to upward mobility. Limited access to higher education for the vast majority of undocumented immigrant students is a significant societal concern. As equal access to public education under the Plyler decision (Olivas, 2010) does not extend to postsecondary education, undocumented status plays a momentous barrier to economic security of students who seek higher education. Because undocumented

workers in the United States operate on the margins of the economy, and the task of adequately supporting their families is enormously difficult, many who have earned their K-12 education in the United States are eager to socially and economically advance through obtaining higher education. Undocumented students are deeply embedded in our communities, often in mixed-status families with members who are permanent residents or citizens of the United States (Suárez-Orozco, Yoshikawa, Teranishi, & Suárez-Orozco, 2011).

Although approximately 65,000 children of immigrants without legal status graduate from high school each year (Passel, 2003), significant structural barriers prevent the vast majority to matriculate to institutions of higher education (Passel & Cohn, 2009). Teranishi, Suárez-Orozco, and Suárez-Orozco (2015) estimate that only 2% of all college students are undocumented immigrants. In some states, undocumented students are obliged to enroll as international students if they wish to enroll in public colleges. Hence, these states require that academically qualified students pay out-of-state tuition even if they have lived in that state for most of their lives. Furthermore, all undocumented immigrant students are not eligible for federal financial aid and government loans (Gonzales, 2009).

Resiliency and Academic Success

In addition to fear of arrest and deportation, multiple obstacles prevent the vast majority of undocumented immigrant students in the U.S. educational system from obtaining a college education. Social and structural barriers are imposing formidable barriers on undocumented students who continue to be marginalized. Racism and discrimination are mechanisms that threaten the academic resilience of undocumented students (Borjian, 2016).

Resilience has been defined as a human capacity to withstand and overcome obstacles despite setbacks (Krovetz, 2008; Medoff, 2010). Some scholars have described academically resilient students as those who are engaged learners and have been successful in tests (Cefai, 2004). Waxman, Gray, and Padron (2003) explain resiliency as "the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (p. 46). Others have sought the inclusion of social-emotional competence and argue that students' ability to form positive relationships can more accurately define academic resiliency (Luthar, Doernberger, & Zigler, 1993; Pianta & Walsh, 1998). Furthermore, for decades, some researchers have emphasized the need to account for students' social and economic circumstances in order to define academic success (Ladson-Billings, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzales, 1992; Valdes, 1998). Moreover, realizing that academic resiliency is a

dynamic process (Johnson, 2008; Masten, 2001), it is important to learn how academically successful undocumented students are coping with challenges and the added stress and uncertainty of reacting to the rhetoric of the Trump administration that has vowed to remove these youth from their institutions of higher education and the communities in which they were raised.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement and contributions of many immigrant youth and their allies have played a significant role in providing the new generation of students the opportunity to attend college (Abrego, 2008). California is among the few states that have passed legislation (e.g., Assembly Bill 540, 2001) enabling students without documentation to pay lower in-state tuition fees. In recent years, more than 200,000 academically qualified students have submitted affidavits to universities across this state (Person, Gutierrez Keeton, Medina, Gonzalez, & Minero, 2017).

Similar to Jensen and Flanagan (2008), we believe that civic engagement should be viewed far beyond voting. Previous research indicates that Latino youth are socially conscious and are contributing to others in a host of valuable ways including advocating, volunteering, mentoring, and social activism, among others (Suárez-Orozco, Hernández, & Casanova, 2015).

University students in California have been instrumental in encouraging policy changes, and many undocumented students have been actively involved in gaining equal status for college attendance (Abrego, 2008). Although emergence of undocumented students' advocacy and activism may coincide with the general population's increased dissatisfaction within the society (Crossley, 2008), Corrunker (2012) argues that it was the pressure from undocumented youth activists that forced the Congress to vote on the 2010 DREAM Act. Although the DREAM Act failed to pass the Congress, Corrunker (2012) asserts that undocumented students' continued immigration reform advocacy and their other civic engagement have enabled them to become more visible and less fearful of legal consequences, in particular, deportation.

Educational Resilience and Civic Engagement

Dual lenses of educational resilience and civic engagement are presented in order to have a framework for examining and reflecting on undocumented immigrant students' motivation to navigate the American education system and successfully enter its colleges and universities.

Overcoming multiple hurdles takes much more than sheer personal determination on the part of the individual student and rather requires interconnected

support systems, including family, community, and school. Aspirational capital is defined as the ability to maintain hope in spite of facing obstacles (Yosso, 2005). Yosso posits that individuals need a network of support from others in order to navigate through social institutions. Hence, if individuals develop a sense of commitment for others' well-being, their resilience can be reinforced. Similarly, Greene (2002) defines resilience as an ecological phenomenon in which a person's environment can offer protective resources that can lead to positive outcomes. Consequently, it can be argued that civic engagement can play a positive role in building resiliency.

Method

The data on which this article is based draw on a larger mixed-methods study in an urban public university. Specifically, this study aimed to address the following questions:

Research Question 1: What significant factors inspire respondents to stay and succeed in college?
Research Question 2: What influences the respondents to be civically engaged?
Research Question 3: How have the outcomes of the 2016 Presidential election affected respondents' desire to continue their college education and to advocate for others?

Data Sources

Academic support staff who work with undocumented students helped the research team gain access to potential participants. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) was employed, and a series of three to five semistructured interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 2004) were conducted with each participant in order to obtain in-depth description of respondents' experiences (Pollio, Henley, & Thompson, 1997). Selection criteria include the following: (a) good academic standing (minimum grade point average [GPA] of 3.0), (b) some level of civic engagement, (c) minimum of 5 years of schooling in the United States, and (d) willingness to commit 5 to 10 hours to the study.

Participants

Of the students who responded to the first phase of the study, eight persons met all the requirements. Four respondents were male, and four were female. Respondents' average age was 22 years with a range from 19 to 26 years old. On average, individuals have lived in the United States for more than 14

years, and all had received their entire secondary education in this country. Three students were born in Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), and five were born in Mexico. Cumulative overall GPA for this group was 3.15 with the range of 3.0 to 3.4. Their career goals include immigration lawyer, information analyst, physician assistant, movie director, electrical engineer, and an entrepreneur. Two respondents had multiple interests and had not yet set a clear career path.

Data Analysis

Patterns of thematic findings emerged from multiple interviews. Data were analyzed through an emergent process that involved multiple readings of each interview transcript and organizing themes into categories within and across interviews (Merriam, 1998). For instance, when a respondent repeated a point several times throughout the study, or multiple respondents presented the same theme, this constituted a pattern. As one concept was noted, it was compared against other concepts and was then further analyzed to identify data related to key concepts in the research questions and the theoretical framework. Data were coded clustering similar units under the themes of resilience and civic engagement. This process helped to identify explanations for the respondents' academic resilience and ways in which they discussed their own civic engagement practices.

Results

Respondents in this study come from socioeconomically marginalized families who continue to struggle to obtain economic security in a region of the United States. Students expressed their strong desire to continue to flourish academically in order to obtain their goal of graduating from college. Participants noted that they worked diligently in their studies because they were motivated to accomplish their ultimate goal of entering into careers that would provide them economic security and a sense of pride.

The election of Donald Trump has saddened and angered the respondents, but they expressed their strong commitment to continue to pursue their dreams. Lisa, Carolina, and Santiago noted that they were upset, but not surprised about the presidential results. All of the respondents expressed the urgency to gain political, legal, and economic support from community members and political leaders who appreciate their realities.

Seven out of eight respondents stated that they faced bullying, racism, and discrimination at various points in their educational history. However, they

all noted that they did not allow these experiences to negatively affect their desire to do well in school.

Significant Reasons That Contributed to Success in College

Respondents described reasons that maintain their tenacity to succeed academically as well as experiences that inspired them to support others in their educational journeys. Although the most prominent reason that contributed to the respondents' desire to succeed in college was obtaining economic security, they also expressed their profound sense of obligation and gratitude to their families for the sacrifices they have faced in raising them. Lisa described her sense of responsibility to her family by noting,

> I knew that if I wanted a better future, and make sure that my mother's sacrifices were not in vein; that I as an undocumented student had to work twice as hard than any other student. I found an inspiration to keep me motivated and it is my mother's struggles that remind me that I have to succeed in life.

Sandra articulated comparable views:

> . . . I grew up with a single mother who taught me the value of an education. She often held multiple jobs; from being a waitress, cooking and cleaning for friends and acquaintances, and even being an "Avon lady," often simultaneously . . .

A similar sentiment was presented by Carolina who stated,

> I was a child that saw her parents go through so much and sacrifice many of their own dreams for mine. My main mission is to make them proud and that when they look at me they see their daughter as an educated successful Latina.

On multiple occasions, every respondent expressed the significance of others in supporting their goals, and several noted that their eagerness to achieve academically was a form of returning the favor to those who gave so much to them.

Two respondents specifically noted that observing the impact of economic injustice that others continue to face and realizing the ongoing economic difficulties of family members have made them much more focused on pursuing economic security. Santiago noted,

> . . . Witnessing firsthand the struggles to make a decent living has made an impression on me. I see my parents work twice as hard as others and only get half as far . . .

Ken framed educational achievement as an act of neutralizing anti-immigrant assumptions and stated,

> . . . I want to prove to society that undocumented students can go to college and succeed. There is this assumption that undocumented people have no future in the states (U.S.). I want to change this by graduating from college and change lives . . .

Anthony explained that pro-immigrant policies changed his attitude from hopelessness to optimism. He stated he had little desire to obtain a college degree and therefore was not a motivated student.

> When President Obama signed DACA in June of 2012 I began to believe in working towards a better future, and truthfully as tragic as that sounds, I had no reason to succeed in college before this event. I always knew that I need to be successful in academia but I just lacked the drive: the cause being lack of opportunity. After all there was zero chance of landing a great job after receiving a bachelors because I did not have the right to work legally in the U.S. therefore it is easy to understand why I just could not bring the passion into my studies. However DACA lifted an immense weight off me and since then I have been struggling and grinding towards succeeding in academia.

Other reasons for respondents' continued motivation to do well in school included optimism and perseverance, act of resistance, and love of learning.

Commitment to Helping Others to Gain Access to Higher Education

Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their desire to stand up for their own causes and to support other immigrants who have not yet been able to enter college stemmed from their strong sense of obligation and responsibility toward others. Learning from other socially conscious individuals was given as another important reason for their motivation to become advocates for others. Respondents emphasized that they have benefited from the support of others and are now eager to give back.

All respondents indicated that they were regularly involved in helping first-generation college students persevere in their education. In describing their commitment to helping others gain access and thrive in college, respondents expressed the importance of sympathetic individuals and organizations that provided them the necessary emotional and financial support to become successful college students. Respondents emphasized the significance of mentors and role models in their own development and how guidance of

others has enabled them to become academically successful as well as socially conscious. Ricardo expressed his appreciation for benefiting from mentors by noting,

> . . . I have been very lucky and successful in college because I have received the support of others as well, and I have been a really active and involved student . . .

Similarly, Adriana expressed the importance of helpful individuals in her life and noted that students and educators who actively worked to achieve social justice in her community gave her the opportunity to be an outreach ambassador. This experience enhanced her confidence to talk to other undocumented students about specific opportunities to gain access to institutions of higher education. Adriana further explained that she continues to be an active volunteer in this organization and views her work as very important in contributing to the next generation of college students. Lisa discussed the importance of being involved in campus organizations. Her experience of joining and participating in a student organization gave her the means to reciprocate. She noted,

> . . . Now I have the resources to share information, encourage others to pursue higher education, and build relationships with allies and people who have firsthand experience with what I always thought to be alone in . . .

Sandra described the impact of her personal experiences that motivated her to become an advocate and activist for others. She expressed,

> . . . When I arrived at the protest, both my friends and classmates were sitting in the front of an ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] bus, which held individuals who were being sent to detention centers . . . I began crying because I remembered ICE detaining my own dad when I was younger. Looking at the bus made me think about families who were going to be broken up . . .

Gaining knowledge regarding legislative initiatives that make access to college achievable to undocumented students was another important reason that enabled some respondents to support others in securing access to institutions of higher education. Santiago noted that although he was not aware of the opportunity to pay in-state tuition until the end of his first year of attending a community college, he now makes it a priority to inform others on how to financially manage their college education. He expressed that not having access to information was a setback for him, but he strives to provide useful information to other undocumented students. Santiago stated,

> . . . I then found out about Assembly Bill 540. This bill was going to allow me to pay in-state tuition. So, it would allow me to go to college without money being a barrier. I could finally not be discriminated because of my status . . .

He later added that this important information came from his peers and not from a faculty member or college counselor.

Respondents noted that they are contributing to their communities in multiple ways. Their contributions include volunteering at local food banks, public libraries, elementary schools, and supporting organizations that defend the rights of others including day laborers, refugees and immigrants, and victims of domestic abuse.

Discussion

This research sought to gain a better understanding of how young adult immigrants have maintained their motivation to do well in college as well as to support others to follow their lead in having access to higher education. Although immigrant youth face societal and institutional exclusion and rejection, many are contributing in meaningful ways to others around them. Civic engagement of immigrant-origin college students has important implications for the future of American society. In fact, how and why immigrants participate in their new country will determine the nature of civil society in this country (Stepick, Stepick, & Labissiere, 2008). Universities have a responsibility in providing opportunities that foster students' academic success and must seek innovative ways to support their development.

These qualitative findings reveal that these working class, undocumented college students not only take their studies very seriously but also have a strong sense of social responsibility. In a way, they view their academic achievement and social activism as not very distinct from the other. Their desire to do well and their work in supporting others stem from personal experiences. These students have felt the negative impacts of social and economic injustice firsthand and are committed to bringing change for themselves and others in their communities.

It became transparent that the social advocacy of undocumented college students served as a strategy to gain the resources needed to overcome barriers. Research suggests that social networks are important for undocumented students to overcome the challenges with environmental stressors (Hallett, 2013). These results are consistent with previous research on building strong bonds with peers. Such relationships facilitate the sharing of knowledge about important campus opportunities that support students' academic success (Montiel, 2016).

This study shows that specific guidance and support can make a difference in the lives of undocumented students, and institutional support is important for academic achievement and development of civic engagement. Students' advocacy could also be partially explained by access to higher education. As noted by Ricardo, Adriana, Lisa, Sandra, and Santiago, attending college has provided undocumented students positive political socialization and the confidence to openly and publicly question existing societal inequalities. Furthermore, they highlight the importance of pro-immigrant legislations at the state level, and presidential actions at the federal level. These actions have had positive impact on the lives of all undocumented college students who participated in this study. Such laws and actions are important alternatives to current national immigration policies and could potentially change public perspectives on immigration issues.

By 2020, having a postsecondary education or training will be a necessity for 65% of jobs in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016). In September 2017, the Trump Administration rescinded DACA and revoked legal status from those protected under this program. This decision severely limits future options not only for students whose protections are revoked but also for younger students who can no longer consider higher education as a realistic or practical pathway to economic security.

Respondents in this study demonstrated their eagerness to liberate themselves from poverty through education and are seeking to achieve fulfilling and successful careers. They expressed their desire to give back to their families and communities and view social responsibility as an important component of their lives. These young people present a clear narrative that reminds us that seeking reform in our immigration policies is a priority. Their experiences illuminate the reality that undocumented immigrant students have greater needs for educational support as they navigate turbulent journeys filled with financial and legal barriers. In addition, in our current political climate, they are likely to face further severe setbacks including risk of deportation.

Implementation of DACA gave students like Anthony hope and enabled him to see college education as a viable route toward income security. Our current immigration policies are keeping millions of college-aged young people captive in low-wage labor positions. Denying academically qualified undocumented students access to college is not only unjust but also economically unwise. These talented students are eager to work hard to obtain a quality education in order to move up the economic ladder. Their progress will be beneficial to all of us.

It is true that students interviewed for this study do not represent a random sample, and information obtained from them may not be generalizable to the

vast majority of undocumented students whose educational trajectories have been halted by a host of economic and social factors. However, being more informed on the interplay between students' individual characteristics and structural support systems can help educators in finding more effective practices that support undocumented immigrant students. Many more students can succeed academically if schools and communities are prepared to offer supportive structures that increase their chances of succeeding in school and in life.

This study extends our understanding of resilience as a dynamic process (Johnson, 2008), which requires vigilance on the part of support providers. The current political climate has caused a great deal of anxiety and uncertainty for many undocumented college students. Knowing that fear of deportation as well as economic uncertainty can severely impede students' academic achievements, educators and support service providers must pay close attention to how students are responding to new obstacles and should be proactive in delivering the resources that undocumented students need in order to succeed in college.

Researchers have long argued that educational attainment plays an important role in achieving socioeconomic mobility (Hout & DiPrete, 2006). Although some respondents indicated lack of information on the college admission process as a barrier, they were motivated to overcome this obstacle and to successfully enroll in college. New political leaders have vowed to take away opportunities from undocumented students who are eager to achieve economic security through access to higher education. The higher education community must mobilize its political, legal, and economic forces against such policies. Furthermore, social/emotional resources must be accessible so that undocumented students can cope with and overcome possible institutional challenges.

Recommendations for Future Research

To better understand the realities of undocumented students who wish to enter college, it is important to identify both barriers and support systems that have influenced academic journeys of undocumented students who are getting closer to reaching their academic goals. Moreover, we need to learn about family circumstances and social environments that affect students' potential in obtaining higher education. As students' social, linguistic, and academic responses to being undocumented in the United States are heavily influenced by many allied factors, we should learn about ways in which families develop their children's resilience in spite of being economically marginalized. Learning about the family's ties to the culture of the country of origin

and the students' academic proficiency in the first language can also further inform us about establishing systems of support and policies that can make academic achievement a reality for many more students.

Furthermore, investigating effective pedagogy employed by educators serving undocumented students can provide valuable information for educational policy makers. By identifying practices that have proven to be sound in supporting immigrant students, educators can provide further guidance to students in becoming academically successful. Those practices should be implemented in K-12 schools as well as in colleges and universities. We need to identify multiple ways in which educators can reinforce students' efforts and determination to succeed in school.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank the young scholars and advocates who are profiled in this article. Their strength and determination is an inspiration to all of us. I am also indebted to my colleagues Marguerite Conrad and Josephine Arce for their thoughtful review of this work.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

Abrego, L. (2008). Legitimacy, social identity, and the mobilization of law: The effects of Assembly Bill 540 on undocumented students in California. *Law & Social Inquiry*, *33*, 709-734. doi:10.1111/j.1747-4469.2008.00119.x

Borjian, A. (2016). Educational resilience of an undocumented immigrant student: Educators as bridge makers. *The CATESOL Journal*, *28*, 121-140.

Cefai, C. (2004). Pupil resilience in the classroom: A teacher's framework. *Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties*, *9*, 149-170.

Corrunker, L. (2012). "Coming out of the shadows": DREAM Act activism in the context of global anti-deportation activism. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, *19*, 143-168.

Crossley, N. (2008). Social networks and student activism: On the politicizing effect of campus connections. *The Sociological Review*, *56*, 18-38.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Gonzales, R. G. (2009). *Young lives on hold: The college dreams of undocumented students*. New York, NY: College Board Advocacy & Policy Center.

Greene, R. R. (2002). Human behavior theory: A resilience orientation. In R. R. Greene (Ed.), *Resiliency: An integrated approach to practice, policy, and research* (pp. 1-27). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Hallett, R. E. (2013). Undocumented student success: Navigating constraints related to retention. *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies*, *5*, 99-112.

Hout, M., & DiPrete, T. (2006). What we have learned: RC28's contributions to knowledge about social stratification. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, *24*, 1-20.

Jensen, L. A., & Flanagan, C. A. (2008). Immigrant civic engagement: New translations. *Applied Developmental Science*, *12*, 55-56. doi:10.1080/10888690801996996

Johnson, B. (2008). Teacher-student relationships which promotes resilience at school: A micro-level analysis of students' views. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling*, *36*, 385-398.

Krovetz, M. L. (2008). *Fostering resilience: Expecting all students to use their minds and hearts well* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1992). Liberating consequences of literacy: A case of culturally relevant instruction for African American students. *Journal of Negro Education*, *61*, 378-391.

Luthar, S. S., Doernberger, C. H., & Zigler, E. (1993). Resilience is not a unidimensional construct: Insights from a prospective study of inner-city adolescents. *Development and Psychopathology*, *5*, 703-717.

Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic: Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist*, *56*, 227-238.

Medoff, L. (2010). *Resilience in the classroom: Helping students with special needs*. New York, NY: Kap1an.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzales, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, *31*, 132-142.

Montiel, G. I. (2016). Navigating the Ivy League: Funds of knowledge and social capital of undocumented Ivy League students. *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*, *28*, 64-79.

Olivas, M. A. (2010). Plyler v. Doe: Still guaranteeing unauthorized immigrant children's rights to attend U.S. public schools. *Migration Information Source*. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/plyler-v-doe-still-guaranteeing-unauthorized-immigrant-childrens-right-attend-us-public

Passel, J. (2003). *Further demographic information relating to the DREAM Act*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Passel, J., & Cohn, D. (2009). *A portrait of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Research Center.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE.

Person, D., Gutierrez Keeton, R., Medina, N., Gonzalez, J., & Minero, L. P. (2017). Effectively Serving AB 540 and Undocumented Students at a Hispanic Serving Institution. Journal Of Hispanic Higher Education, 16, 256-272. doi:10.1177/1538192716628956

Pianta, R. C., & Walsh, D. J. (1998). Applying the construct of resilience in schools: Cautions from a developmental system perspective. *School Psychology Review*, *27*, 407-417.

Pollio, H., Henley, T., & Thompson, C. (1997). *The phenomenology of everyday life: Empirical investigations of human experience*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Stepick, A., Stepick, C. D., & Labissiere, Y. (2008). South Florida's immigrant youth and civic engagement: Major engagement, minor differences. *Applied Developmental Science*, *12*, 57-65. doi:10.1080/10888690801997036

Suárez-Orozco, C., Hernández, M. G., & Casanova, S. (2015). "It's sort of my calling": The civic engagement and social responsibility of Latino immigrant-origin young adults. *Research in Human Development*, *12*, 84-99. doi:10.1080/15427609.2015.1010350

Suárez-Orozco, C., Yoshikawa, H., Teranishi, R., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2011). Growing up in the shadows: The developmental implications of unauthorized status. *Harvard Educational Review*, *81*, 438-472.

Teranishi, R., Suárez-Orozco, C., & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2015). *In the shadows of the ivory tower: Undocumented undergraduates and the liminal state of immigration reform* (The UndocuScholars Project). Los Angeles: The Institute for Immigration, Globalization, and Education, University of California, Los Angeles.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2016). Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_5YR_S0502&prodType=table

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2017). *Number of I-821D, consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, by fiscal year, quarter, intake, biometrics and case status, FY 2012-2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Valdes, G. (1998). The world outside and inside schools: Language and immigrant children. *Educational Researcher*, *27*, 4-18.

Waxman, H. C., Gray, J. P., & Padron, Y. N. (2003). *Review of research on educational resilience*. Santa Cruz: Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence & University of California.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion on community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *8*, 69-91.

Author Biography

Ali Borjian received his PhD in language, literacy, and policy from the Stanford University's Graduate School of Education. He is a professor in the Department of Elementary Education at San Francisco State University. He is a Fulbright scholar and has conducted research on cross-national teacher education programs. His research interests include teacher education and contexts of learning for immigrant children and youth.